

January 2014



PHOTO: USAID/AVIPA

*In Kabul Province, Said Agha checks on his soon to be harvested crop. His income has increased by 50 percent for the vines he has trellised.*

## AGRICULTURE SNAPSHOT

- Established more than 446 veterinary field units
- Administered 26 million vaccinations to livestock
- Trained more than 636,000 men and women in improved farm and business skills
- Established a \$100 million Agricultural Development Fund to provide loans to Afghan farmers
- Brought 317,077 hectares of alternative crops under cultivation
- Established 18 farm service centers that provide access to high quality materials, and serve as centers for access to market and technical information
- Facilitated over \$290m in increased sales of legal farm and non-farm products

## BACKGROUND

Agriculture is the main livelihood for roughly 75 percent of the Afghan population. The growth of the agriculture sector is crucial for national food security and is a major economic driver for the entire country. The agriculture sector expanded by 18.2 percent in 2012, after two years of decline during 2010-11. The United States from 2002–2012 invested \$1.9 billion to enhance crop productivity through improved seed varieties and small-scale irrigation; foster supply-chain development and the marketing of high-value horticultural crops; support the growth of agribusiness finance; and increase the capacity of the Afghan Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL) to deliver agriculture services more effectively. The international community, through the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund, has funded the rehabilitation of watersheds and irrigation infrastructure (\$90 million); planted more than half of the targeted orchard crops of 8,000 hectares (\$100million); improved inputs delivery to farmers (\$75 million); and developed a strategic grain reserve for reducing food insecurity (\$12 million).

## RESTORING AFGHAN HISTORICAL AGRICULTURAL STRENGTH

Prior to decades of conflict, Afghan almonds, pomegranates, pistachios, raisins, and apricots were high-demand products across Central and South Asia. Since 2002, thanks to U.S. government assistance to the sector, high-value fruit and nut production has rebounded and Afghan agricultural commodity traders are reestablishing markets in India, Dubai, Pakistan and elsewhere.

USAID investments helped create an estimated 276,000 agricultural job opportunities and improved Afghan farmer access to technologies and financial services. Working with the US Department of Agriculture (USDA), USAID distributed seed, fertilizer, tools, insecticides, pesticides, and vaccines to roughly one million farmers; fielded 446 veterinary teams to vaccinate and treat livestock; and brought some 2.7 million hectares under improved natural-resource management practices in 1,628 communities.

Since 2003, more than 150 USDA agricultural advisors have helped provincial and district officials provide services to farmers and agriculture sector businesses more effectively. Starting in 2008, U.S. National Guard Agribusiness Development Teams (ADTs) from 18 states have contributed to these efforts.

USDA's focus on improving the organizational capacity and efficiency of MAIL, resulted in MAIL qualifying for the highest level of support in a World Bank-funded program to attract high-quality specialists to civil service positions. The World Bank has pledged to fund 331 such positions in MAIL at competitive salaries.



## AGRICULTURE (continued)



PHOTO: USAID/AFGHANISTAN

*A woman places peppers out to dry. USAID established the first Women's Farm Service Center, a boost for women's participation in the agricultural economy.*

PHOTO: USAID/AFGHANISTAN

Assistance to Afghanistan's agricultural sector is shifting from agricultural assistance in support of military operations to a long-term, more sustainable development approach. In order to expand economic opportunities for Afghanistan's rural poor and contribute to broad-based economic growth, future projects will center on food security, agricultural productivity, market and value chain linkage, improving government services to the agriculture sector, gender issues and water and watershed management.

### BOOSTING CAPACITY AND INCOMES FOR WOMEN

USAID supported the establishment of women's farm service centers in Kabul, Balkh and Parwan regions, serving more than 40,000 women farmers. These centers give women farmers access to quality seed, fertilizer, and machinery. Other areas supported by USAID because of the prevalence of women farmers include dairy processing, poultry production, nurseries and greenhouses. USDA also trained more than 2,000 women in small-scale horticulture production.

### RESULTS TO DATE

- Distributed seeds, tools, and other basic agricultural inputs to more than one million farmers.
- Established more than 446 veterinary field units and administered more than 26 million vaccinations.
- Established a \$100 million Agricultural Development Fund to provide loans to Afghan farmers and credit groups, with \$37 million dispersed to date to 22,000 farmers.
- Agriculture Development Fund activities have resulted in loans to women-owned enterprises worth more than \$685,000.
- Facilitated over \$290 million in increased sales of licit farm and non-farm products in assisted areas.
- Brought 2.7 million hectares under specialized natural resource management in areas where the ecosystem is particularly fragile.
- Created 276,000 full-time equivalent jobs.
- Brought 317,077 hectares of alternative crops under cultivation.
- Facilitated exports of 15,600 metric tons of fresh fruit to regional markets.
- Planted 9 million saplings and grape vines on 6000 hectares.
- Established 18 Farm Service Centers (FSC). These FSCs have generated sales and services worth more than \$49.4 million, trained more than 37,690 people, and given 10,126 farmers access to credit. Three FSCs are solely owned and operated by women.
- Trained more than 2,600 MAIL provincial staff in demand-driven extension practices.